



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

May 8, 2003

**BREVARD COUNTY BANK ROBBER
FACING 85-YEAR MINIMUM MANDATORY SENTENCE**

ORLANDO - A jury in U.S. District Court in Orlando today found a Cocoa man, **Ronald Bernard Mills**, age 38, guilty of four counts of armed robbery and four counts of use of a firearm during a crime of violence. Mills previously had been indicted by a federal grand jury on February 13, 2003.

The four counts of the use of a firearm during a crime of violence carry a minimum mandatory sentence of 85 years. Any additional sentence imposed in the four armed robberies must be served consecutively. Mills still faces the prospect of additional prison time on four counts of possession of ammunition by a convicted felon that had been severed before the trial.

According to the evidence presented at the trial, Mills robbed Brevard County branches of the Space Coast Credit Union and the Bank of America, as well as convenience stores belonging to Amerada Hess Corporation and 7-11 Corporation, between October 11 and October 18, 2002. During these offenses, Mills possessed a loaded .22 caliber revolver which he used to threaten bank employees, customers and store clerks while robbing the businesses of cash.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Brevard Resident Agency of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF"), the Cocoa Police Department, the Rockledge Police Department, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Orange County Sheriff's Office. This is another case prosecuted as a part the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods" - a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative with strong support from the ATF. United States Attorney Paul Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort here in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials, calling our effort "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!" The objective is to reduce violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws.

Mills will be sentenced on July 23, 2003 by the Honorable U.S. District Court Judge John Antoon, II. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr. and Special Assistant United States Attorney Gregory J. Konieczka.